

THE

№ 3.

HISTORY
OF
THOMAS FRANKLAND.

A Lying Tongue is but for a Moment.



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THOMAS FRANKLAND,
OR THE MISCHIEF OF
DECEIVING OUR PARENTS.



Mrs. FREELOVE and her daughter Fanny, pleased with the delightful scenery and refreshing coolness of a summer evening, prolonged their walk through the village adjoining to their estate. The family were greatly respected and beloved ; for there was scarcely an inhabitant who had not, on one occasion or another, received some proof of their benevolence. Mrs. Freelove very frequently, when the weather permitted,

called at the dwellings of the sick and afflicted, that she might administer something toward their relief; and Fanny, although but nine years old, willing to imitate the virtues of her mother, sometimes added her mite to the great work of Christian charity. A child is never too young to do good.

Mrs. Freelove was not one of those ladies who consider their superior fortune merely as an instrument by which to increase their luxuries. She applied *her* property to a noble purpose—that of relieving the distressed, and adding to the comforts of the aged and industrious, and enlarging the enjoyments of the neighbouring poor. *This*, my young friends, is the purpose for which riches were designed; and be assured, that those who have not, in some measure, applied a part of their fortune to these uses, will find an awful deficiency in their account at that solemn day when they will stand before their Judge to answer at his tribunal for their behaviour to the poor. The Judge of all the world will say to many, when he condemns them to everlasting misery, “I was sick, and ye visited me *not*—I was naked, and ye clothed me *not*; for inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, *my brethren*, ye did it not unto me.”



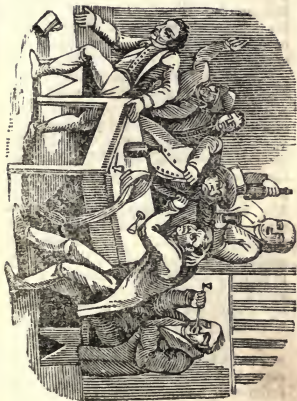


‘These,’ adds the *word of Christ*, “shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” Matthew, xxv. 43.

The whole village, on this evening, appeared particularly happy: the whistlers were whistling as they returned from work; and the boys and girls were enjoying their innocent amusements on the green. Fanny could not but express her joy at their apparent happiness; particularly when passing the door of William Baker’s cottage, she saw him, surrounded by his wife and children, engaged in returning thanks to God for the mercies and blessing of the preceding day. “Well,” cried Fanny, as they left the cottage, “how happy they seem!” “Yes, my love,” replied Mrs. Freelove, “you may see from this how little riches and splendour have to do with real happiness; and that it flows from a contented mind, and a reliance upon God. All the magnificence of a palace could not add to the pleasure which Baker enjoys in the midst of his family. Riches rather promote cares, which Baker is unacquainted with; for believe me, it is generally the case, that more cares than real enjoyments attend the possession of wealth.” She was here interrupted by the rude sound of discord, issuing from

the tap-room of the village tavern; where some of its unworthy inhabitants were spending the hard-earned wages of the week in riot and drunkenness. Fanny was quite shocked at the noise. It however presently ceased; for one of the company seeing Mrs. Freelove through the window, put an immediate stop to their ill-timed merriment. Even the wicked respect the good; and though the vicious may attempt to oppose the opinion of the virtuous, yet vice is always afraid, and only virtue can be bold.

They had no sooner passed the tavern than Fanny began her remarks, and blamed those *husbands* who were rioting and merry-making rather than spending their wages at home. Mrs. Freelove said that perhaps they ought to attribute the behaviour of *some* of them to the conduct of their *wives*, who did not make their homes comfortable, and thereby attract them to their families. "You must not believe, my dear," said her mother, "that every cottager's *wife* is like Mrs. Baker. You may depend upon it, that if a wife takes no care to keep her house clean, and make it pleasant to her husband, who has been labouring all the day for the support of his family, that he will be tempted to go to the



tavern, where, perhaps, he is sure to have a good fire, and to meet company who will not find fault with him. Though this may in some slight measure excuse his being from home, yet it never can be urged in excuse for keeping bad company."

"Look at Farmer Frankland," cried Fanny, "how pale and sorrowful he is, and how comfortless he appears." Farmer Frankland was indeed sitting alone at the door of his house, which was at a little distance from the village. He was seated on a chair, leaning on his stick, and contemplating the scene before him. The happiness of the rustics, the animating glow of the setting sun, and the richness of the golden harvest, now just gathered into the barns of the farmers, presented a melancholy contrast to his *own* misery. His hoary locks bespoke age; and the tear of sorrow, falling from his eye, as he seemed to look back on past times, too plainly told that he was not a happy man! A gleam of pleasure, however, appeared in the faint smile that animated his venerable face at the sight of Mrs. Freelove. "Ah! madam!" said he, "God reward you for your goodness to the afflicted! I often feel pleasure when I read the Bible, in considering that what you have done for



me will be returned ten-fold!" She modestly stopped his expressions of gratitude, by asking him the state of his health. "Alas! madam," said he, "I have not, I feel I have not, long to stay in this world, and I am not sorry for it! My wife is gone, and, by the blessing of God, through whose goodness I was some years ago brought into the ways of religion, I shall soon join her: and my son—here the tear started from his eye—Oh! madam, *that* is my greatest misery." "Come, come my good old man," said Mrs. Freelove, "don't thus cloud the evening of your life: rather look forward to that eternal happiness which we may have through Christ, and in which the sorrows you have sustained here will be forgotten. I know that you are acquainted with the source from whence alone true comfort can be drawn."

Mrs. Freelove and her daughter proceeded through the village, and began their return to their own hospitable mansion. The pallid features of the venerable Frankland had made such an impression on Fanny's mind, that she desired her mamma to tell her the particulars of the sorrowful circumstances that had induced the misery of his old age.





When I first became acquainted, said Mrs. Freelove, with honest Mr Frankland, he held a small farm near the village, which his industry and frugality had made profitable. He had been married about five years to a prudent and good woman, and they had one son, the care of whose rising youth seemed to form their principal pleasure. They applied themselves the more to the cultivation of their farm, that they might be enabled to educate him as they wished, and to lay by something that might be advantageously applied to his future settlement in life. In their savings Frankland never exhibited the least covetousness; but, as far as his means extended, he helped his neighbours in their difficulties, and never turned the wandering beggar unassisted from his door. They endeavoured to impress on the mind of their son religious sentiments by a corresponding conduct. That their instructions might receive additional force, they early took him to hear the word of truth from our worthy clergyman, who is himself well instructed in the ways of righteousness, and wishes to instil the true principles of Christianity into the minds of all around him, and particularly of his parishioners, who are especially placed under him to be guided in the

way to heaven. Under this minister's valuable instructions, and blessed by the excellent example of Mr. Frankland, Thomas became all that his parents and friends could wish, and promised fair, all the time he lived at home, to be a blessing to their declining life. When he became of sufficient age, Frankland's parents deemed it prudent and necessary that he should be put into some way of trade which might in due time enable him to earn a respectable maintenance. He was accordingly apprenticed to a shopkeeper in a neighbouring town. His good behaviour and steady conduct in his situation soon gained him the confidence of his master, and the esteem of the customers. They were always glad to be served by Thomas, as they knew that their orders would then be punctually and properly executed. After he had been in the shop a few years, and while he was increasing in his master's favour daily, a young man, somewhat older than himself, was hired as a shopman. This man had served his apprenticeship in London; and from *that* circumstance he was not only considered a great acquisition to the business, but his services were envied by the neighbouring shopkeepers, on account of his having been bred in the metropolis,





not considering that his wickedness would be worse than a pestilence to all his associates : for wicked people are the more dangerous when they possess wit or genius. "One sinner destroyeth much good."

Harry Highmore, as might be expected, far excelled Thomas Frankland in the style of his dress and gentility of his behaviour : but his thoughts and principles were wicked—his manners were corrupt—and his mind was hardened against the importance and value of Christianity, or even the common precepts of morality. In London, as far as the limited state of his pocket would allow, and often much farther than prudence, or the circumstances of his parents warranted, he indulged in every species of vicious pleasure. As Sundays were the only days on which his business gave him his liberty, these days, instead of being dedicated to the service of his Maker—the everlasting salvation of his immortal soul—instead of being spent in private and public prayer—reading and hearing the word of God, to be instructed in the divine will—instead of being employed in thanksgiving to him, who had preserved him through the week, and to whom he ought to have looked as his guide and helper through life, were

spent by him and his companions in rioting and drunkenness. A conduct, this, tending to the disturbance of those who were willing to use the Sabbath profitably, and heart-rending to Christians, who cannot but be shocked to see their Redeemer's honour so grossly violated, and young people ruining themselves in body and soul. Harry Highmore was the man to be the companion of young Frankland! and because his other manners and behaviour were obliging, he soon caught the attention of simple-hearted Frankland.

At first, indeed, Tom was excessively shocked at the manner in which Highmore spent his Sabbaths. It was in a way so contrary to that in which he had been brought up, that he thought it his duty to blame him, and to entreat him to alter his conduct. After some little time, however, *this disgust wore off*, and Thomas felt a desire to enjoy those Sunday pleasures which every Monday morning were regularly related by Highmore, and with the intent to induce him to become a companion in such dangerous pastimes.

One *Sunday* morning Tom Frankland did not set out for his father's house till the day was somewhat advanced. As he was proceeding on his way, he accident

ally met Highmore and one of his companions. Young Frankland wished to pass them, but Highmore swore he should accompany them. This Frankland refused, alleging that his father and mother were expecting him, and would be uneasy at his absence. "Come, come," said Highmore, "none of your *dutiful* excuses here—we are going to be happy; what, are we to be shut up behind the counter all the week, and to be kept like prisoners on a Sunday too? No, no, liberty and pleasure for me, whenever I can get it!" Tom, unable longer to resist the raillery and ridicule by which he was attacked, consented to go with them, provided they would first let him ask his parents' leave. "No, no," said Highmore, "we won't let you go; but I'll go and quiet the old ones;" and away he flew across the fields to farmer Frankland's. Tom waited anxiously for his return, when, Highmore said, every thing was right, for that he had *hoaxed* them famously, by giving his master's compliments, and that he had occasion for Tom that day at home, as every body was going out. This *deception* at first displeased young Frankland, but their laughter and ridicule kept him silent, and indeed the riotous pleasure that they were soon after engaged in, made him

thoughtless of the method by which it had been obtained.

The next morning, however, brought with it repentance: his *conscience* told him he had done wrong; but he thought that a determination to avoid transgressing in future would be sufficient—little thinking how weak every mortal is of himself, if he do not constantly ask help of God to preserve his good resolutions against the united attack of ridicule and temptation. As for Highmore, he applauded himself mightily for the part he had taken, and was much pleased with his success, as it, in some measure, brought Frankland upon the wicked level with himself: for the goodness of Tom's conduct had long been offensive to him, when it came into comparison with the general depravity of his own. When Frankland, therefore, the next morning lamented his behaviour, Highmore laughed, and, at length, too successfully persuaded Tom that these stings of conscience were merely the effects of cowardice, and only fit to be indulged by mean-spirited fellows, and that it was unjust and shameful that they should not enjoy themselves the only day they were at liberty.

"Thus, my dear child," said Mrs. Freelove, "did *ridicule* overpower the

moral principles in Tom's heart; or at least so repress them, that they were unable to withstand the sneers of Highmore. I would have all young persons guard against the fear of man, and be assured that *such ridicule as Highmore's will never reflect the least disgrace on any but those who utter it, and those who are affrighted by it.*"

Matters gradually went on worse and worse, till Frankland now *wished* to renew the pleasures he had once enjoyed of joining Highmore's Sunday-party. Highmore was not backward in discerning this inclination, and induced Tom to contrive, in the course of the week, to tell his parents that his master wished him to spend his next Sunday with him; though the blush that overspread his cheek, and the feeling of remorse in his heart, almost made him recall his words as soon as he had uttered them. The fear of Highmore's ridicule, however, repressed these inward emotions of conscience, and he left his parents *completely deceived* by the falsehood! Their parting blessing, however, did not make him happy, as it usually had done. He was *conscious* that he did not deserve it. Nor could he, on retiring to bed, utter his prayers to God with any comfort; for how could he commit himself with any

sincerity into the hands of a Creator who knows every word of our lips, and every thought of our hearts, and who has said, "*lying lips* are an abomination unto the Lord; but the prayer of the upright is his delight." His conscience told him that God accounted it a most horrible sin *to deceive his parents* in the way he had done. He tried, however, to comfort himself by making a resolution that it should be the *last* time! Indeed it was the *last* time; but it became so by a circumstance very different from any thing he had expected.

On *Sunday* morning, as it was proposed, the party sallied forth; Tom leaving his master under the impression that he was, as usual, going home to his parents.

These youths spent their *Sunday*, as such parties generally do, in eating and drinking, and strolling about till the evening, by which time the liquors they had drunk so raised their spirits, that nobody could pass unmolested by their jokes. Frolic succeeded frolic, till Highmore, perceiving an old man walking alone in a green lane, proposed, for what he chose to call *fun*, that they should frighten the old man by *pretending* to rob him. This was agreed to by all the party except Tom; who, however, soon joined

in the scheme, *to stop the torrent of ridicule* that began to fall upon him for his refusal. Upon their repeated assurances that it could come to no harm, Tom, with the others, surrounded the man, and laid hold of his clothes. The traveller, frightened by such an attack, immediately delivered his money, which one of the party, who, perhaps, had a deeper scheme than was meditated by the others, immediately seized. Just at this moment a party of men came in sight, who giving the alarm, Highmore and his companions ran off; but the old man's representation of his robbery immediately caused a pursuit; and Frankland, either not being so swift as the others, or not imagining any danger, was soon taken; and, in spite of all his protestations of innocence, was dragged to a house where the old man was waiting. He no sooner saw Tom than he pointed him out as one of the youths who had stopped him. Upon this, without more to do, he was hurried before a magistrate, who, finding the evidence clearly against him, was obliged to commit Frankland to the county gaol to take his trial for a *highway robbery*.

The circumstances of the case had succeeded each other so rapidly, that poor Frankland had not time to reflect,

and was unable to utter a syllable in his defence, and was scarcely sensible of the rough manner in which he was treated. But at length, left by himself in the prison, his senses somewhat returned, and his mind began to ponder upon the horror of his situation! his character ruined for ever—his *deception* discovered—an indelible stain cast on the name of his beloved parents—and all his hopes in life completely blighted!

To these considerations were added the bitter remorse of his conscience, which *now was his most vehement accuser*; and so prevailing were its accusations, that the punishment, which it now became evident awaited the crime that Highmore had called *fun*, scarcely produced its proper degree of fear.

How different, my dear Fanny, said Mrs. Frelove, was the consequence of this *Sunday* of promised pleasure, obtained by such base means, from the peaceful conclusion of those former Sabbaths which Tom had spent at home, and at church, under the immediate eye of his parents! While receiving and returning their endearments, and profiting by their instruction, he was in the way to be blessed by God, and to become a blessing to them. But now, alas, how changed his condition! in a prison—ac-

cused of an offence tending to cut short his life—already under the condemning sentence of his own conscience—and without one consoling reflection to brighten his dreary prospect, at least as to the *present* world. Whether, however, he reflected on the good instructions he had received at home, and at church, and from the religious books his parents had put into his box with his clothes; and whether his truly pitiable condition made him seriously desirous that God would pardon his sin in having so *deceived* his parents—a crime that had brought on *all* his troubles—we know not. Whether he so *read* and *thought* about the salvation of his immortal soul, and obtained such friendly religious advice, as that at last he committed his departing spirit to Christ Jesus as his only Redeemer, is also all unknown to us. We would *hope* this, but we have no certain account respecting it.

A rumour of what had happened to his son soon reached the ears of old Frankland. Unable to believe such a report, he hurried to his son's master with a heart full of anxiety, and arrived but to hear that his worst fears were realized. He was at first completely overpowered; but he prayed to God for strength, and God gave him some degree of fortitude to sustain his affliction, in a



way that the *foolish philosophy* on which so many rely never can do! This sad story was to be communicated to Tom's *mother*; and though every precaution was taken in the communication, the shock was so great that it overwhelmed her! Her maternal feelings were not to be described, and in a little while her friends followed her to her grave—a sacrifice to the disgrace of her son!

Not till after some days could old Frankland assume sufficient courage to visit his once happy son, whom he now found the victim of despair—hopeless of regaining his liberty—and dreading his father's anger more than the vengeance of the law. But Farmer Frankland endeavoured to teach him to look to the divine mercy for pardon of his sin; and, by frequent visits, in some measure relieved Tom's mind from its distress.

At length the day of trial came! The prosecutor swore positively to Tom's person; and as Highmore had absconded, and no other accomplice had been taken, he was found guilty, and the judge pronounced the awful sentence of the law, amid the tears of the whole court. Farmer Frankland, who had endeavoured to support his son through the awful scene, was carried out senseless, and did not recover from a severe ill-